An old man who lives on the side of a Maryland mountain and has trouble getting around with a cane says the author of a best-selling JFK assassination book is a "fraud" and a "plagiarist" who doesn't know the difference between a major-league second-baseman and a Dallas railroad boxcar wino, both named Harrelson.

Harold Weisberg, 81, former investigative reporter, United States Senate investigator and editor and World War II intelligence analyst, has a low opinion of Gerald Posner. He says Posner's "mistitled" book, Case Closed, "is the most dishonest of them all, and that is a field in which the competition for that distinctioon is tough."

"Posner and his publisher boast that he is a 'former Wall Street lawyer' from one of its most prestigious firms," Weisberg says. "Posner spent a couple of years doing the most menial 'discovery' work that does not even require a law degree. A check of the indices does not disclose that he ever took a case to court."

"Doesn't the media check anything out any more?"

Speaking of the enormous attention to the Posner book, which concludes as did the Warren Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President John F. Kennedy, Weisberg asks, "Can you imagine, when U.S.News puffed up that trashy book on its cover and in much of that issue and reveled with Posner in what he claims he 'discovered' only by the most advanced computer enhancement, he was actually plagiarizing the faulty work of a boy - who was published on it coast-to-coast?"

"Can you imagine," the old man asks rhetoricaly, "when Posner boasted of all the supposedly new evidence he got from his 200 interviews,

nobody checked that out, either?

"One of his 'prime' sources referred to the former Member of the Warren Commission, the respected conservative Democratic Congressman from Louisiana, Hal Boggs, as a Communist, of all things!"

A New York publisher, Carroll & Graf, has just issued Weisberg's Case Open. Of those Posner interviews Weisberg says that Posner used them only to avoid the official evidence that is contrary to what Posner wants believed. He cites as an example Posner's boasting of his "exclusive " interview with the defected KGB official, Yuri Nosenko, while suppressing what he says is the most important information Nosenko gave the FBI.

"I published that FBI report in 1975. The KGB suspected that Oswald might be some kind of American agent. It did not trust him. It had him watched all the time he was in Minsk. And it knew that Oswald was both anti-U.S. Communist and anti-USSR while he was still in the USSR.

"That's some interviewer, that Posner, when this is what he uses interviews for - not to report this.

"But what has happened to our media when TV was fighting to get him on, when he was extensively interviewed from coast-to-coast and when that book, which is based on plagiarism, not only from that kid, was so extensively syndicated throughout the entire world? Nobody did the checking we'd expect a high school student to be smart enough to do?"

Unrelenting in his contempt for and ridiculing of Posner and his acclaimed book, Weisberg needles him about his claimed basis for portraying Oswald as a born assassin waiting for his "historic" moment, Dr. Renatus Hartogs, the New York City psychiatrist who examined the boy Oswald as an ill-behaved truant.

"Hartogs swore to the exact opposite iin his Warren Commission testimony," he says. "Posner merely skipped that page while quoting from both sides of it. And not only that, but what a source Hartogs is! He was one of those shrinks who got free sex from his women patients until directed by a State Supreme Court jury to pay one $350,000 for it on March 19, 1975."

Weisberg is the author of six earlier books on the JFK assassination and one on that of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the early 1970s. In that case he served as James Earl Ray's investigator in Ray's unsuccessful effort to get a trial from the federal district court in Memphis, Tennessee.

Weisberg obtained about a third of a million pages of withheld official assassination records through a series of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuits. Several were precedental. In amending FOIA's investigatory files exemption in 1974 to open FBI, CIA and similar files to FOIA access, it cited one of his earliest suits as establishing the need.

All his records, official and of his own work, and their property on the side of Gambrill Mountain near the city of Frederick were deeded to Hood College years ago. The records will be a permanent public archive on the assassinations.

As part of its centennial observations last August, Hood awarded Weisberg and his wife, Lillian, honorary doctorates in humane letters for their work.